

**St Mary's Parish
Our Lady of Fatima
St Joseph St. Therese Parish
Strategic Task Force Planning- Kick Off
April 25, 2019, 6p-9pm**

Father Daniel LaCroix opened the meeting at approximately 6:05pm, created a signal for listening- welcomed all members of all three parishes, St Mary's, St Joseph-St. Therese, Our Lady of Fatima

We have been discussing in the past meetings about sharing ideas and resources, and now we are here today to come together and put those ideas into action.

Msgr. Oliveira led the opening prayer, for planning....Why are we here?
This is not about closing churches, it is about collaborating together and moving forward stronger, we have one choice...."We have to work together", none of our churches are Full any longer, so we cannot go one working separately and competing with each other, we have to come together, join forces and resources, build and grow together.

The most Reverend Bishop Edgar M. daCunha, wants us, the people, to make suggestions and come up with ideas and a plan on what to do.

Msgr. Oliveira reviewed the parishes that have already joined together and what they did and how they are doing. (Example: One Faith Formation program versus multiple)

Again we have 6 priests retiring this year and only one priest getting ordained in the next year, most urgently we have 50 priests for 80 parishes.....
What are the needs of the priests? What needs to be done? When will it be done?

Merge Model review
Chapel Model review
Link Model review

Most likely one priest will have 2 parishes....how to streamline could be examples like: one bulletin for all affiliated parishes, one Faith Formation for all, one Youth group for all, etc.....

Marilyn Blanchette, Diocesan Consultant, spoke in regards to... "how do we let our priests be priests? How can we give Father Raposo, Father Hamel, Father LaCroix, the support needed so they can do the Work and Word of the Church?

It's about US, the people, getting together and getting used to what GOD is calling us to do in the City of New Bedford, what is it that we do well together that we could build from?

The work of living out a plan will be the work that God has called US to do.
Encourage others to come to the next meeting- as there are so many people from all parishes who wanted to attend but couldn't...

Mark Dollhopf, Diocesan Consultant, spoke in regards to Mark and Marilyn meeting with the, The Most Reverend Bishop Edgar M. daCunha, 1 ½ years ago to start this process and at that time there were 73 priests! Each of the collaborative will be down at least one pastor by the end of the month. We need to make decisions and implement a plan BEFORE a crisis point!

Lay people MUST step up please. The Burden should not be on the Pastor Alone. Pastors are overwhelmed by administrative work.

The most Reverend Bishop Edgar M. daCunha, has taken advice from the members of these parishes of collaborative. It is a difficult change, even for our Pastors, the time for competition has ended and it is a NEW time for growth and strength with Collaboration. An opportunity to look at finances of all 3 parishes and decide what is Most important to US!

What can we do to make our Churches grow!?! Look at facilities, Look at properties. An opportunity to go to Mass where the church will be full.

We need to Evangelize and move forward even during this time of crisis we are facing in the Catholic Church.

At this time, we have 3 volunteers for breaking out into groups: one volunteer for facilitating, one volunteer for scribe, one volunteer for ensuring the sign in sheets are completed and count group members

Group 1: 10 attendees

Group 2: 2 attendees

Group 3: 12 attendees

Group 4: 4 attendees

Group 5: 15 attendees

Group 6: 9 attendees

Meet, discuss, plan and around 830pm start to wrap things up, facilitators to watch time.

Task Force Planning ended approximately 9PM

Thank you to ALL involved and participated, looking forward to meeting again, and please encourage more to come and join!

Respectfully Submitted,

Paula Lopes

Jacquelyn Collins

Pastoral Planning Team